583 certain relatives. According to Shaw these represent the conventional payment which is made without question or discussion.(1) They are the basic minimum required if the marriage is to be concluded. One or two at a time are transferred over a period of about two years.

2. The *ahe i kony*: additional cattle, the number of which is determined after lengthy negotiations between the husband's people and the wife's people. They average about 5 to 7. A number of goats are also handed over. If the two families are very friendly the transfer of the last animal may be postponed until the marriage of a daughter of the union.(2)

The father of the bride gets the bulk of the animals, most of which will be used as bridewealth for the marriages of his sons. The bride's maternal uncle gets a heifer and, according to Shaw, her paternal uncle gets a bull and heifer.(3) Usually the bride's family make some return gifts to the bridegroom's people, amounting to at least three head of cattle.

686 If there is a divorce the husband can demand the return of the cattle with their progeny. Usually every effort is made to avoid repaying bridewealth and the wife is often replaced by a sister or cousin. If two children have been born no bridewealth cattle would be returned if the wife died or left her husband; if there were only one child the bridewealth would be returned but two or three beasts would be retained.

*Marriage Ceremonies*

583 According to Evans-Pritchard, there are two forms of marriage: *yor* and *nako*.(4) *Yor* is marriage by elopement, and is regarded as shameful. Usually the girl's parents accept the situation and the union is regularised by the acceptance of some cattle - but fewer than is normal. *Nako* is the correct and usual form of marriage; a long chain of events intervenes between the time of obtaining the parents' permission to marry, and the marriage itself. It takes several months to complete a marriage, sometimes several years, according to the individual family circumstances.(5)

●585 When the parents on both sides agree to the proposal of marriage, there follows the ceremonial capture of the bride - the *nako nyako*. A mimic fight occurs between the bride's people and the bridegroom's party, and the bride resists to show that she is not eloping. She goes to the bridegroom's village and is deflowered in the presence of witnesses. She is given a girdle with a tail *(ciemo)* which she wears as a sign of her new status.

The *diero* and *lapo* ceremonies take place within a few weeks and are followed by the *dimbo* party, which consists of a visit to the bride's parents and the paying of respects to her mother. There is feasting, singing and drinking through the night, and a few days later the bride returns to her parents' home. The bride now spends part of her time with

(1) Shaw, *JEANES*, 1932, Nos.4&6, p.45.
(2) Evans-Pritchard, *Africa*, XX, 1950, p.139.
(3) Shaw, *op.cit.*
(4) Evans-Pritchard, *op.cit.*, p.132.
(5) Shaw, *op.cit.*

the bridegroom and part with her parents. The bridewealth payments now begin and the wife's parents try to hurry up the payments by luring her home on frequent visits. The bridegroom cannot prevent her departure or demand her return. To get her to return he hands over another animal and she then stays with him for a short while. This procedure is repeated until the bride is definitely recognized as his wife and stays with him except for brief visits to her old home.

The *rim* ceremony is the binding act of marriage. After it the husband is entitled to redress if the wife has intercourse with other men. As the husband is anxious to start a home and cannot do so while his wife keeps running back to her parents, he presses for the *rim* ceremony to be held as soon as he has paid 6 to 12 head of cattle. It is rare for a marriage to be broken off after this stage has been reached. The *rim* ceremony is held in the husband's homestead and is a day of celebration. The wife is given a series of presents by her husband's people, each gift being named as it is presented to her. She herself keeps some of them and they are taken by the girls of the *rim* party from her parents' village.

The final ceremony takes place a few months later when the husband tells his wife to cook for him instead of cooking in his mother's hut. Usually after the birth of the first child he begins to built an *ot* - a proper dwelling; up to this time the couple have lived in the bachelors' hut *(siwin)*. Necessary household articles are collected by the wife from her parents' home and so, after a great number of ceremonies and rituals, the union is accomplished and the basis of a family is laid.

RESPECT *(LUO)*

The Luo practice extensive avoidance as a part of the general attitude of respect to a wife's family. A man turns his back to his parents-in-law when speaking to them and avoids them if he meets them on a path. He never visits his mother-in-law naked.(1) This attitude of respect is extended to all the members of his wife's lineage, particularly the older people, and including the lineage of her maternal uncle. The husband's brothers, on the other hand, respect only his parents-in-law and immediate kin of their generation.

The avoidance rules are relaxed as the marriage gradually grows more stable and children are born. A ceremony is held at the birth of the first child to enable the husband to enter his mother-in-law's hut and eat there. The husband and his brothers are invited to eat after a goat has been presented to them.(2)

## RITUAL AND OTHER CULTURAL FEATURES

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

The Luo believe in a supreme being whom they call Nyasi. He is

(1) Evans-Pritchard, *Africa*, VI, p.141. (2) *Ibid.*

*Par*

These terms refer to the ordinary form of Luo marriage. There is another and rare form called *par* which is marriage by elopement, and is regarded with chagrin and disfavour. A man brings a girl to the *simbo* where he penetrates her. She remains in his house and cooks in his mother's hut, a sure sign that a woman regards herself as a wife. Or a man and his sweetheart run away to a distant tribe and cohabit there. The girl's family may try to make her return to them, but if she refuses to do so they regularize the union by accepting some cattle from her lover, though he does not pay as many cattle as he would have done had the marriage been negotiated in the usual manner. A girl married to-day by Christian rites is sometimes referred to disparagingly as a *dhako ne par* because she cooks in her husband's home immediately after her wedding.

*Ikolo*

*Ikolo* is the common form of marriage, and the word is also used for the first phase of it, the abduction of the bride and her deflowering before witnesses. A youth, having obtained his father's consent, looks for a suitable wife. He may already have his eye on a local girl, but frequently he goes with a friend to look for a bride from the home of a distant kinsman in whose neighbourhood there are plenty of unrelated girls. When he hears of a nice girl he visits her home and sits in its *simbo* till she and the other girls of her house come to chat with him. If he likes the girl he later returns to her home accompanied by two friends, one of them, called *jagwe* or *jatish*, being a friend of both families whose business it is to negotiate between them. The young man asks the girl to marry him. If she is unwilling the marriage is unlikely to take place, even though her parents are agreeable to it. If she favours him she tells him to discuss the matter with her parents. When they consult the parents the suitor sits between his two friends so that the people of the home can tell at a glance, if they look into the *simbo*, which of the visitors it is who is asking for the hand of their daughter. The suitor leaves the *jagwe* to do the talking. As he is a friend of the girl's family her father knows that he would not have undertaken to act as go-between unless the suitor had enough cattle. There is no mention of cattle at this stage.

The next phase is the abduction of the bride. The young men of the bridegroom's home come to the girl's home in the early morning and wait outside the entrance to the kraal. The *jagwe* enters the homestead and goes to the *rambuli*, the girls' dormitory in charge of an old woman called the *jaw*, and he shouts to this old woman that he wants their bride. After being promised a present the old woman opens the door. The girl at once begins to make trouble. She holds on to the old woman and screams and struggles as the *jagwe* drags her away. The young men of the village come to her assistance and a mimic fight takes place between them and the youths from the bridegroom's home. It is seldom that a bride is averse to going to her husband, who may have long been her lover, but she must resist with as much noise as she can to show that this is not an elopement but a proper marriage. Once she is out of earshot of her home she goes quietly with the young men. When they arrive at the bridegroom's home she goes straight to the *simbo*, where his brothers and sisters entertain her, the sisters chaffing her and telling her that their home is a much better place than the one

3: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1934) 1950 FL11 Loo FL11



she has left. The bridegroom keeps away from her—they are shy together and do not converse when in company.

After the bride has been dragged from her house the girls of her homestead follow after her singing. This singing party of girls, called *jodongo ot owuon*, arrives at the bridegroom's house in the evening. Here when place the defloration of the bride in the presence of her sister, called *jodong*, perhaps accompanied by another girl of her home, and one of the bridegroom's married brothers. The *jodong* lays an ox-hide on the floor of the hut and draws the bride and bridegroom, both naked, towards it. She puts out the fire and in the darkness the marriage is consummated, though without orgasm. The witnesses rekindle the fire and by its light examine the man's member for the ring ward, the hymen. When the *jodong* sees it she shouts the news to the girls of the singing party outside, who then enter and beat the bridegroom, saying: 'You have killed our sister.' He goes out quickly and goes away. The visiting girls and the young men of the house sing together all night, the bride remaining with them in the *simbo*. If the bride is found not to have been a virgin there is no singing because of the shame. However, it makes no difference to the validity of the rite and if there is subsequently a divorce, a cow called *chir dong nyako*, the cow of the maiden's honour, has to be paid by the bridegroom's people whether his bride was a virgin or not.

Early next morning the party of girls return home, taking the hymen with them and singing all the way. When they enter the bride's homestead all the people of the house throw ashes towards her father and mother. The girls then eat, for they are very hungry, not having eaten at the bridegroom's home. His parents took no notice of them, either by providing them with food or in any other way. 'They are enemies.' The bride remains in the bridegroom's home, and the *jodong* with her to keep her company. Still no bridewealth has been paid and there has been no discussion about it.

Shortly after the marriage has been consummated the bridegroom's people give the bride a *cwer*, a girdle with what looks like a tail, made of fibrous material, at the back, to wear as a sign of her new status. They present her with a goat at the same time. They also give her a small pubic covering.

### Diero

A large party, called *jodiero*, now—generally on the day after the defloration, I believe—goes singing from the bride's district to the home of the bridegroom. There may be more than a hundred young men and girls in this party, the men bearing clubs and shields and wearing ostrich-feather head-dresses. They wait outside the bridegroom's homestead and send the bride's brother to call her out. When she comes her brother asks her: 'What do you think? Do you agree that we ask for a bull? Are you willing to stay with your husband and be his wife?' The *jodong*, who has come out with her, knows her mind and answers for her. The brother reports to his companions that she agrees. They enter the kraal and point to an ox and say that they want that one. The bridegroom's father may do no more than promise them an ox but generally he gives it to them right away, though not the animal they have chosen for they will have picked out the best he has. After argument they agree to accept the one he gives them and take it home with them. It is kept by the bride's father and counts as part of the bridewealth. Two or three days after the visit of the *jodiero* party

I: Evans-Pritchard E-6 (1936) 1950 FL11 Luo FL11



the bride's sisters visit her, bringing porridge. Often her parents kill a goat and cook it and send the meat with the porridge, and it is eaten by the bride and the bridegroom's sisters. The bride's sisters return home the same day if they live near, on the following day if they live far away. The bride generally returns to her parents after this visit.

*Lepo*

About a week later takes place the *lepo* ceremony. The bride's family kill a bull and sometimes also a goat or sheep and some fowls. If they are rich they may kill two bulls. Apart from one foreleg, the head, and the skin, which they keep for the elders of their own household, the carcase is taken raw to the bridegroom's home by the bride's young kinsmen in advance of her young kinswomen who follow with the cooked intestines, some meat off the ribs, and porridge. The bearers of the meat take it to the hut of the bridegroom's mother where it is divided into customary portions among the people of his home. When the bride's kinsmen have put it down they fling their clubs at the fowls till they have killed a cock, which they roast in the dung fire and eat. They shout to the people of the bridegroom's home demanding porridge to eat with it, but this is not always provided. They then return home, passing the girls who are bringing the cooked meats.

The girls wait a few hundred yards away from the bridegroom's homestead and send a girl to the *simbo* to summon the bride to come and eat. She asks the messenger whether the other girls of the home have been told about it and the messenger replies: 'No, it is for you to collect your people together.' The bridegroom's people, and not the people of her parents' home, are her people now. The bride shouts to the girls of the homestead, chiding them: 'Come out and eat. We want to feed you. You never see good meat in this homestead. Now you have married a rich man's daughter and will get meat.' The bride comes out of the homestead with the *jadong*, who has been with her all the time, and her husband's sisters. They sit down and eat the meat, the bride herself eating only a morsel, while the visiting girls sing in the kraal. When they have finished their meal they join the visitors with whom they fix a day for the next ceremony, the *dando*, the returning of the bride to her parents. The visitors then return home.

*Dando*

This ceremony is called *ter* to the south of the Kavirondo Gulf. It takes place a few days after the *lepo* ceremony. The husband's people and their friends form a party, called *jodakeyado* or *joterayado*, to visit the wife's parents. Before setting out the women of the home smear the wife and the *jadong* with butter at the entrance to the hut of the husband's mother and throw sesame over them. The sister of the husband brings a twig and hands it to her brother and tells him to beat his wife. He gives her a stroke with it. The sister then hands it to the wife who strikes her husband with it. The party now set out, often taking a goat with them. The husband's sister leads the procession, followed by the wife and her *jadong*. When they reach the wife's homestead its womenfolk rush out and prevent them from entering it. An old woman, preferably the bride's grandmother, pierces the lower beak of a fowl, threads a cord through it, and ties it round the wife's neck. She then cuts off the lower beak and throws the

J: Evans-Pritchard E-S (1934) 1950 FL11 Luo FL11



fowl to the ground. The small boys of the house kill it and afterwards eat it. The visiting party now enter the kraal and pay their respects to the wife's mother. The night is spent in eating, drinking, singing, and flirting. If the owner of the homestead is rich he may kill an ox in the morning for the visitors to feast on. The visitors then return home, taking with them the wife, or bride, but not her *jadieng*. The wife returns to her parents after spending a few days in her husband's home.

So far there has been no talk about cattle, but after this ceremony the husband, or his father, begins to pay bridewealth and the wife's parents put pressure on him to expedite payment by encouraging their daughter to return home on frequent visits. The husband cannot prevent her departure, nor can he demand her return, but he has the right to send his brothers to seize her and drag her, screaming and struggling, to his home whenever he sees her at a public gathering, to-day often at a market. The husband pays an animal, then the wife returns to her parents, then he pays another animal, and so on, till the parents are satisfied and let him take his wife for good.

*Puro*

The husband starts paying the bridewealth after the *dudo* ceremony by sending to his parents-in-law a young bull called *dher puro* because his father strikes it with a twig of the *puro* tree before dispatching it to them. The wife remains with her parents for about a month after this payment, and then takes place the *dudo puro*, the returning of the twig, when the wife returns to her husband in the company of her *jadieng*. She stays with him a few days and returns to her parents.

*Rito*

As the husband is anxious to start a home of his own and cannot do so while his wife is constantly running back to her parents he now pays the cattle as fast as he can. When he has paid from six to twelve head of cattle he sends his *jagaw*, the go-between who negotiated the marriage, with his brothers to tell his father-in-law that he has now paid the bridewealth and wants the *rito* ceremony to be held. He says that he will pay later the cattle still owing. After this ceremony his wife will remain with him and be a full wife to him in both a domestic and a legal sense. She will cook for him and he will have redress if she has sexual intercourse with other men in the *simbo*. The *rito* is the binding act of marriage.

When the *jagaw* and the husband's brothers make their request the wife's people laugh at them: 'What are twelve (maybe) head of cattle? You are playing a game. You can go and tell your brother to come and take his cattle back.' The *jagaw* refuses to make any more payments, so they tell him to go back and tell his friend to remove his cattle. When the husband hears this he asks his relatives and friends to accompany him to his parents-in-law. They take a heifer or young bull with them to placate them. The husband assumes a downcast expression and makes himself appear as miserable as he can. He does not cheer up even when his parents-in-law send him beer to drink in their *simbo*. The visitors ask for their wife and her father may consent to her going if they promise to pay the rest of the cattle soon, but usually he is obdurate. He says: 'Go and get that cow. You are still playing a game. I don't want to keep the girl here. It rests with you when you take her. You can take her to-day if you like, but you must first bring the rest of the cattle.' The *jagaw* and the father argue. Everyone

knows more or less what is going to happen. If the husband is really poor the father will eventually give way. If he has a number of cattle the *jagaw* gives way and promises one more beast. It is very rare for a marriage to be broken off on account of cattle at this stage. If the father is very obstinate the husband's people return home leaving the husband behind to milk in his father-in-law's *simbu*. He refuses to eat the food his mother-in-law sends him there and gets an occasional meal with friends in the vicinity. After several days his father-in-law says to him: 'Hello, are you still here? What are you doing here?' The young man replies: 'I want to die here in your kraal.' The father-in-law says: 'You can't do that. Get out.' He refuses to go without his wife and finally the father-in-law says: 'I am tired of you both. Get out and take your wife with you, and mind you pay that cow quickly', and he calls his daughter and tells her to get out with her husband as he is tired of seeing him there. He pushes them both out of the homestead.

The ceremony of *rire* is then held in the husband's homestead, where he has collected all his relatives and friends. It is a day of great gaiety. The wife and a party of girls from her home come singing to her husband's home. When they are a few hundred yards from his homestead the wife and two of her friends hide themselves. The other girls come on in a body, enter the kraal and go straight to the *simbu*. One of the husband's brothers asks where are the rest of the party, meaning the wife. The wife's eldest sister replies: 'I don't understand what you are talking about. There is no one missing. We are all here.' Some youths are sent out to scout round to see if they can find the wife. They move softly, looking about them and listening for sounds. When they find the wife they pull her to the entrance of the kraal. Here she says: 'I don't want to enter your homestead. You give me what you know.' He promises to give it to her later in the *simbu*, but she refuses to enter without a payment, so he gives her an arm-ring, called *nunyago* in Alego and *anyago* in South Lacland. At the entrance to the *simbu* she says she must have something in return for bending down to enter it and they often make her another gift for this purpose, though a rough brother of her husband may just take her by the scruff of the neck and push her in. In the hut she says that she is very tired and wants to sit down. One of the men forces her to sit.

The visiting girls spend the night at the husband's home. Some of them may spend it with local youths in their bachelor-huts. Next morning the husband's people bring a bull or an ox and call the senior girl of the wife's people and ask her to accept it. She always says that it is too small, but when the husband pleads poverty she accepts it. The visiting girls take some of the meat home with them on the following day, but they eat most of it that night in the *simbu* after the husband's people have given the wife an ornament in return for that privilege. They must give her another present to enable her to sit down there. All the husband's people bring her gifts. She sits with her legs tucked under her and has to be given a present to stretch them. She says she wants to spit and they give her something to enable her to do so. She says that soot from the roof may fall in her eyes, and they give her something to compensate her for the risk. They also give her a number of other presents, each of which has its name: *re yanyi nare*, a goat to pay in advance for any insulting remarks the husband may make about his mother-in-law; *re lwar tawe*, a goat for the wife to place her husband's daily gruel respectfully before him; *gir kangala kiga*, an ornament for the burns a wife

3: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1934) 1950 FL11 Luo FL11



585 431 many items while cooking; *gir ot*, an ornament for the utensils the husband will send his wife on; *gir ogolo olawo*, an ornament for cleaning up the spittle her husband will always be expectorating on the floor; *gir bago*, a present for the water a wife brings her husband to wash his hands with; *gir nono wi*, a present to enable the husband to sleep with his head on his wife's arm; *gir ringo kowo*, a present for fetching her husband's stool; *dimol tham*, a goat to enable her to cook in her husband's home; and perhaps others. These gifts are made to the wife by her *jaws*, the paternal kinsfolk of her husband, particularly by his brothers. Each gift must be named when it is presented to her. The wife herself keeps *none* of these gifts. They are taken by the girls of the *rite* party and others of her kinswomen.

Next morning the husband chaffs his sisters-in-law, asking them where they have spent the night. They reply: 'You are bad people and you have done us an injury. You are outcasts, you and your wife also.' The girls have a muddy meal and leave for home taking with them the *rite* gifts and the remainder of the meat. To the south of the gulf the husband's people send the meat to the bride's home before the ceremony, except for the portion they keep for the girls of her home who attend it.

*Sajo*

585 591 After the *rite* the wife remains with her husband. She may visit her parents after two or three months, but she does not constantly return to them as before. Likewise, her husband's people cannot now seize her when they see her at a public gathering, for she is now a *dhako*, wife, and not a *nyako*, bride. A few months later takes place the final ceremony of marriage, the *sajo*, called *gasgo* in Southern Lookland. One day the husband says to his wife that he wants her to cook for him instead of cooking in the hut of his mother, which up to this time she has used for the purpose, she and her husband making the *simbo* their dwelling-place. The younger brothers of the husband have in the meanwhile built themselves a new *simbo*. Now the husband—usually after the birth of his first child—begins to build an *ot*, a proper dwelling-hut. The wife goes back to her parents to tell them that her husband wants her to do her cooking in her own hut. They raise no objection. The husband's father also gives his consent.

585 The wife returns once more to her parents to collect household utensils with which to start a home of her own. They give her pots, gourds, a wooden spoon, and other utensils. If they are rich they also give her an ox, if poor a sheep or a goat and some fowls and flour. Only a few girls accompany her to her husband's home to help her carry these things. When they arrive there her husband's brother's wife brings three cooking-stones and calling the wife tells her that she wants to teach her how to cook. She goes through the usual actions preliminary to cooking a meal and when all is prepared the wife cooks it and serves it to her kinswomen who have accompanied her. Sometimes they have brought a sheep or goat with them from the wife's home so that she can serve them with meat.

*Mikako*

583 The marriage has been successfully brought about by the succession of ceremonial stages described. Had sufficient cattle not been paid the parents of the wife would not have permitted the rites to proceed to a conclusion. There seem to be several words for bridewealth among the Luo: *mikako*, *dho nyamolo*, and *dho kuny*. The number of

4: Holdsy G-S (ex. 1900) 1902 FL11 Lee FL11



were in black. Others smear themselves with white earth. Relatives in the village shave their heads three days after a death. The eldest son of the deceased sits on a stool in the road outside the village and his head is shaved by an old woman. For three days after the death of anyone of importance the villagers do not cultivate.

If a big chief dies all the surrounding people collect at the village, even if a neighbouring clan is at war hostilities are suspended, and they attend the funeral rites of their late enemy. In the case of the death of a chief a new hut is built and the deceased is buried inside in a sitting posture; the grave is dug by a brother of the deceased. A new ox hide is placed at the bottom of the grave, and the head of the corpse is covered with a water pot. Seeds of every kind of grain grown are put into the grave; sweet potatoes are excluded. The people dance and drink mulo for ten days and many cows are slaughtered. The men wail for ten days, but the women wail every morning for about a year. No one cultivates the fields for ten days.

*Birth customs.*—On the occasion of a birth, if it is a boy it is kept inside the house for four days, if it is a girl for three days. When a birth takes place the female neighbours attend, and a goat is killed for the mother and the other women. No man is allowed in the hut until three or four days have elapsed. The father of the child does not eat or sleep again in the hut until the child begins to cut its teeth. The mother does not go to cultivate for about nine days after the birth.

If a woman has had two children and they have both died, she will upon the birth of the third child take it out of the village on a basket-work tray and place it in the road; an old woman who has had a hint of this will go and pick it up and take it to her house, then the father of the child goes and buys it back for a goat. having recovered it the father bores the lobe of the right ear and inserts a small earring of brass wire. If the child is a boy it is henceforward called Owiri and if a girl it is called Awili, meaning the child that has been thrown away. The old woman who picked up the child is afterwards called mother in addition to the real mother.

Twins are considered lucky, but the infants and their parents have to stay in seclusion in their hut for a whole month. Women neighbours may enter the hut but men may not. The twin born first is called *Apio* (the one who comes quickly). The twin born second is called *Adongo* (the one who is delayed). The birth of twins is signalled by dances which extend over a whole month; they are apparently of a somewhat obscene character.

*Marriage customs.*—Girls are espoused at the age of seven, and they often go to their husband's house at the age of ten or eleven. The suitor commences by making small payments to the father of the girl every month or two. When the man has paid say one cow and twenty sheep he takes the girl to his house.

The unmarried girls of the village take the bride to her husband's house. The father of the girl kills an ox and takes the meat and a quantity of native porridge to the man's village by way of providing a wedding feast. If the man's

4: Hobley G-5 (ca. 1900) 1902 FL11 Loo FL11



village is a long way off the girl's relations sleep at his village, but if they can manage to do so they return the same day. Next day the bridegroom's brothers and his other wives take the bride back to her father's village and there is a great feast and much drink; the bridegroom does not go. 585

The father of the girl next day presents his daughter with a goat and she returns to her husband. The girl's husband then continues to make payments to his father-in-law; the total amount it is necessary to pay varies from two to six cows; if he stops paying his wife will go off to her father's village and stay there for a month or so until the man resumes payments. Before the big attack of cattle plague in 1890 and 1891 it is said that as many as forty cows were sometimes paid for a wife. 583 585

If a woman does not bear her husband a child quickly the husband stops his payments, but the husband has no claim for the return of any of the property as long as the woman stays with him. If a wife dies and has borne no children the property is returned, or one of her sisters is given the man to wife and the man only pays about twenty goats for the sister. 583 587

If a woman will not stay with her husband she is married to some one else, and the first husband is repaid from what the second husband pays. If a woman has a child and is ill-treated she can leave her husband but the child belongs to him; if the child be a boy, when it grows up and the mother grows old she will generally come back to live with her son. If after a marriage has been arranged a father is loth to part with his daughter the young man employs his friends to waylay the girl in the daytime. If the girl however refuses to stay at her suitor's village and runs away, the property paid over is returned without delay and the match is broken off. If a woman remains unmarried for a longer period than usual she often goes off to a *chief* or someone with plenty of cattle and states that she intends to stay there and work for him; in such a case she is usually taken to wife, but the man pays much less than is nominally customary. Chiefs have from ten to forty wives. They are generally speaking very moral in their domestic relations. They do not intermarry in the same clan, but a man will marry the daughter of a man named the same as himself. 586 583 [622 595] [582]

*Pottery.*—All pottery is made by women and is similar to that of the Bantu Kavirondo, and consists of water pots, cooking pots, *beale* pots, etc. 323

*Dyes; tanning.*—These people do not use dyes, neither do they tan, but they soften skins by rubbing in fat and hand-working till soft. 281 386

*Arms, etc.*—Their shields were formerly made of buffalo hide but are now made of cow hide; the shields are usually very large, curving round the body of the man carrying it. They also make shields of ambatch wood (called *Orindi*). They have a great fancy for spears with shafts of enormous length, ten feet or more; the heads are very small and insignificant. Use simés and clubs to a small extent; the former weapons are however I think copied from the Masai or Nandi. Also use bows and arrows; the arrows were formerly poisoned, but 411

8:Shaw G-5 (ca. 1930)1932 FL11 Loo FL11

When the *dho gelo engimbo* had been paid the bull and the heifer —the *dho dier*—chosen by the bride's brothers after the mock battle outside the bridegroom's *dala* were sent over by the bridegroom. If, after the *dho dier* had been received, the marriage was broken off by the bridegroom he had to pay compensation to the bride's father for the meat and beer consumed at the feast of the *tero nyako*, and he was also bound to pay one bull for the loss of the girl's virginity. Even if the girl, or her father refused the marriage at this stage, the bridegroom was still bound to pay this bull. 584 587 586

With the payment of the *dho dier* what may be regarded as the ceremonies of the betrothal were completed, and the marriage process entered on a new stage. 585

The stage was marked by various presents of cattle made by the bridegroom to certain of his future relatives. He gave a number (sometimes as many as fifteen) known as the *dho ikeny*, to the bride's full brothers. If she had no brothers the *dho ikeny* passed into the possession of her mother who might, if she wished, allow them to be used in the payment of bride-price for one of her husband's sons by another wife. (In this case the young wife was expected to treat her step-mother-in-law as she would treat her own husband's mother, and to help her in the fields and the home.)

In addition to the *dho ikeny*, the bridegroom sent a bull and a heifer (the *dher wuon nyako*) to the bride's father, and another bull and heifer (the *dho jochieno*) to her uncles on the father's side.

Finally a cow and a calf (the *dher min nyako*) were sent to the bride's mother. These, with their offspring, became her absolute property. She could, if she chose, use them to contribute towards the payment of bride price for her sons, or equally could refuse to allow them to be used in this way. After her death they were inherited by her youngest son. 585 422 428

When all these had been handed over, and it should be noted that they were, apparently, conventional payments, made without question or discussion so long as they were within the means of the parties concerned, like our own engagement rings and wedding presents, then the discussions began about the number of cattle to be paid over in return for the transfer of the girl from one family to another—the true bride price itself. I believe that in some parts the number to be paid over was settled by discussion between the heads of the two families before the girl had been ceremonially captured. But the elders at Nyahera told me that there the custom was that the bridegroom conducted the discussion with the bride's father himself at this much later point. 583 585

He went over himself to the bride's *dala*, accompanied by his brothers and friends to the number of fifteen or sixteen, and taking

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582 with him three or four cows. The party entered the dala very slowly
•585 feigning indifference and reluctance. The bridegroom made himself as inconspicuous as possible, and tried to conceal himself in the midst of his companions. No ceremonies took place on the day of arrival, but the guests were given food and spent the night in the simba hut. On the following day the bridegroom was taken to the hut of the bride's mother and made formally known to her. Meat was killed and the day was spent feasting and drinking. Finally in the evening the bridegroom and the bride's father sat down together and the [533] bargaining began. The rest of the gathering were entertained by a professional minstrel who sang topical songs, some composed to meet the occasion. He too, incidentally was a guest, which, for some reason I could not discover, had to be presented to him by the bride. He was also given presents by the girl's father and mother.

During the bargaining the bride's father tried to get as large a payment as possible out of the bridegroom. If he was too greedy the negotiations were broken off, and the bridegroom paid compensation for the expenses incurred in entertaining his party and for the loss of the bride's virginity. But if the two came to an agreement that agreement was final, and no further demands on the father's part or subtractions on the part of the bridegroom were allowed, unless the former demanded to see the cattle before accepting them. This was sometimes done, and if the cattle were unsatisfactory he might refuse to proceed with the marriage. If, on the other hand, he trusted the bridegroom, the negotiations were considered closed, and he might even consent to receive a proportion of the bride-price after instead of before the final marriage feast had taken place, and the girl left her home for good. In this case the bridegroom had to give an extra bull, known as the *ruadh kiraya*, which was sent over for inspection before the feast took place. If it was accepted the final ceremonies were then carried through.

583 In most cases the bride-price itself was paid by instalments over a period that varied with the ability of the bridegroom's father to meet his liabilities. Usually some months elapsed before the whole number of cattle had been handed over, and it might even be a year or two before the girl's father received all that was due to him. During this period it was customary for the girl to pay her future husband a visit from time to time. She was always accompanied on these visits by one or two girl friends, and was expected to stay for several days. She slept in the simba hut with her betrothed, and intercourse took place. It sometimes, though rarely, happened that the girl conceived [944] on one of these occasions. This was bad luck for the girl's parents, but fortunate for the bridegroom, for it was absolutely necessary that the child should be born in his dala. He could in consequence hurry on the marriage, which could now take place before the whole of the

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dowry had been paid; he was thus enabled to spread his payments of the bride-price over a longer period than would otherwise have been possible. Also the fact that the girl was with child prevented her from being carried off by any other man; apparently a not unheard of occurrence. 583

The wedding feast itself—the *kiriya*—took place in the bridegroom's *dala*. The bride arrived accompanied by her sisters, or, if her sisters were too young to go with her, by her brothers' wives. She was also attended by one older woman, perhaps a married sister, who acted as a chaperone. It was the special duty of this older woman to see that the bride was properly treated, and to make herself polite to the father and mother of the bridegroom. But with this exception older men and women were never included in the bride's party. Any man who attended himself to it would have been laughed at for mixing himself up with an affair that concerned women only. On the other hand not only did the bridegroom's sisters attend the feast but, as well, all his brothers, half brothers, and first cousins (in other words all the people he called "brother"), the wives of his brothers, and all his male friends. 585

As a rule the wedding feast lasted only one day, but if the guests had come long distances, it might last two or even three days. The feast consisted of porridge and meat. The young people were not given beer, but the bridegroom's mother usually brewed a small quantity for her husband and his brothers.

The meat provided consisted of the flesh of a bull which was cut up and apportioned according to certain definite rules. The division was the duty of the bridegroom's father, who first of all cut a small piece from the neck and sent it into the bridegroom's mother, who waited in her hut to receive it. He then cut more small pieces from the neck and scattered them outside and inside her hut. This was an offering to the ancestral spirits, and was accompanied by the following prayer:— 585 782

*Dho wonigo dhiang mar dhakowgo zungi dato obi ochom kod jachien okato ni tichako kwaro gi wuoro gidogo wuoi ringoro ngani ohwo nato kiringia moruch ohol mon gima mabor dalo dato.*

Prayer and offering were together intended to placate the ancestral spirits and to persuade them to bless the marriage. After this the right fore leg was cut off and placed in the centre of the mother's hut. This fore-leg had a special name, *kodjachien* and was a gift to all the ancestral spirits. It was afterwards eaten by the bridegroom's father and mother, and part of it was dried and sent to the bride's mother.

The whole of the breast, with the exception of a small piece reserved for the bridegroom's brothers, is sent to the brothers of the 585 184

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585 [89] bride. It is a curious fact that only young men (youngsters-bachelors) may eat this part of the animal. The elders told me that in Gom, Alego, Seme, Uyoma, Asembo, Kadimo and Ugenya the breast is set aside to be eaten in the early morning by the friends of the bridegroom. But in Kano, Kisumu, Nyakach, and Kisumdo it is used as I have described.

One fore-leg and one hind-leg were sent to the parents of the bride, and two small pieces of the liver were also allotted to them. The rest of the liver was eaten by the elder men living in the dala, and the lungs, heart, and stomach were divided and disposed of in the same way as the liver. The thick part of the stomach was also the perquisite of the elder men, who also ate the contents of the small intestine mixed with blood and used as a relish. This concoction was called kirkwet and was highly esteemed. Half of it was sent to the bride's father. Here again there was a difference between the customs [89] of Alego, Gem, Seme, Uyoma, Sakwa, Kadimo, and Ugenya on the one hand, and those of Kisumu, Kano, Nyakach, and Kisumdo on the other. For in the former districts kirkwet was eaten by men and women, whereas in the latter districts only the men were allowed to eat it. This difference may well provide an interesting clue to the past history of these two divisions.

The lumps was divided into two parts, one being sent to the bride's parents, and the other half being eaten by the parents of the bridegroom. The ribs and loins were the portion of the women guests, who were also allotted the kidney and the pancreas which men are forbidden to eat, for fear of contracting the disease known as Ayikoondo. Women with child may not eat these portions in case the child is a boy.

585 591 After the kinyo was over the girl was regarded as having finally passed into the fully married state. But even so there were still certain ceremonies which had to be observed before she could take up her residence in her own hut, specially built for her by her husband and there assume the normal duties of a married woman.

The building of this hut was never begun until the wedding feast was over. While it was being constructed the girl slept first in the cook-hut, and later in her mother-in-law's hut; and before it was finished the girl returned to her own home for a short visit, taking with her that part of the dried fore-leg of the bull (bad jorkiro) which had been set aside for her mother at the wedding feast, as well as other presents of food. It was explained to me that these gifts were 585 in the nature of a compensation to the mother for her absence from [93] her daughter's wedding feast, and they may indicate that in earlier times it was the custom for the mother to accompany her daughter on that occasion. While the girl was at home the mother prepared a

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large quantity of beer, even as much as nine or ten pots full, and when the girl returned to her husband's dala, not only this beer, but also a goat or a sheep, or perhaps a large quantity of fish was sent with her as a present for her husband's parents. 585

On her return a ceremony known as the *ngwar dipo* took place. It was also known as the *wero dipo*. *Ringruo* is the name of a plant, and it is also the name for a broom or brush. *Dipo* is the open space in the middle of the dala. *Wero* means the stomach contents of an animal. All these elements enter into the ceremony, which consisted of the following events. The father-in-law killed a bull and one of the front legs provided a feast for the family, the hindquarters and the other front leg were set aside to dry, but the stomach contents were strewn over the *dipo* and left there until the evening. Meanwhile the father-in-law made a brush of *ngwar* which he gave to the girl, and with this broom or cloth, she swept the *wero* into a heap, afterwards laying hot ashes over it to burn it up. In the morning the ash heap was scattered to the wind. When the dried meat was ready the girl was sent with it to her old home where she presented it to her parents. She then went back to her husband and was allowed to carry out two duties hitherto forbidden her. These were the tending of the fire in her mother-in-law's hut, and the preparation of food for her father-in-law. This indicated that she was at last a full member of her husband's family and so might render services that only a member of the family was allowed to perform.

After the *ngwar dipo* she lived in her mother-in-law's hut until her own hut was ready. The framework was built by her husband, and he was expected to thatch the roof himself, but his brothers helped him to prepare the mud for the walls and in building them up. When the hut was finished the girl again visited her parents and brought back with her a ram or a billy goat which was killed to provide a feast to reward the labours of her husband's brothers. Even then, however, the bride might not live independently in her own hut. She was expected to spend the day with her mother-in-law, doing all the laborious parts of the house work and generally holding herself at the beck and call of the older woman. This arrangement normally continued only until the birth of a child, but if the two women got on well together it might endure until a second child was born, when it invariably came to an end. On the other hand if one of the husband's full brothers married the younger woman was immediately relieved of her duties to her mother-in-law by the new bride. Failing both these events of escape and the birth of a second child she continued in her mother-in-law's service until her husband could afford to take a second wife, when her duties again would devolve upon the new-comer. It is often a cause for wonder to those who are unacquainted with the details of native life and custom, that in poly- 591 591 591 595 606

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582 [585] There are no restrictions as to the number of women a man may marry nor as to the number of his wife's sisters whom he may take to wife. Previous to her marriage a young woman may have as many lovers as she wishes, she is only careful to avoid incestuous connections. The unmarried women have their own quarters in a village and the young men theirs, and they seldom have any further intercourse than that of brothers and sisters; the young men, however, from another village pay visits to the young women during the day and make love to them, and in the evening the women return the men's visit and have sexual relations with them, while other young people sing songs of an obscene character and dance outside the house. Such intercourse is not stopped nor discountenanced by the elder people, as it is a recognised custom. Should any children be born from such [848] relations, no punishment ensues nor are the couple blamed. When a father considers his son old enough to marry, he chooses 584 a woman to be his wife. He then takes a cow and a goat to the parents of the young woman and arranges with them the amount to be paid for the marriage-fee. If the parents 585 consent to the match, when an instalment of the fee has been paid, the bride is conducted by her friends to the home of the young man and lives with him as his wife for ten days: during this time there is daily singing and dancing outside the house where the bride and bridegroom reside, and they take part in the dances. At the end of ten days the bridegroom's parents give a feast to all those who have gathered, and after the feast the friends of the bride escort her back to her parents, who in turn give a feast to the people that accompany their daughter. The bride remains with her parents until her husband is able to obtain and pay the full sum asked for as the marriage-fee. During this time, while the bride is waiting for her husband [837] to bring the marriage-fee, there is no obligation upon her to live a chaste life, and she is free to have as many lovers as before. When, however, the fee has been paid and the bride claimed, she ceases to live a loose life and becomes most chaste. The husband builds his house, either in or near his father's 591 village, and his wife is brought thither. When a man marries

915 smears a little clay in front of both ears of all the people who come to the feast, and
852 each of them do the same to the mother in return. All of them decorate their necks
and waist with *bwombwe*, a creeping plant; then they start a most immodest dance;
834 scarcely covered with their grasskirts they simulate the copula, and the vilest songs,
704 which no decent person could ever listen to. After the dance they enter the kraal
578 where food is ready. There they have the beer. The relations of the woman stay
over for the night, but all the others go home.

852 *Mawil Kumwe* is a similar dance, which is indulged in, when a woman has
834 given birth to a child, of whose conception she did not get aware of for some con-
595 siderable time. The people who come to this dance are her lovers; it does not last
786 so long either. In stead of a bull only a goat is killed by the relations of the woman,
and some beer is brewed for the feast. Other ceremonies are the same as after child-
birth under usual circumstances.

## Betrothal and Marriage.

584 Before any other arrangements are made, a boy intending to get married
tells his parents that he wants to look out for a partner through life. If the
father has any cattle towards the dowry he will agree, and tells his son to make
his choice, and inform her relations. When he has found a likely girl he invites
a couple of friends, one of whom at least knows the relations of the girl well
[582] *(intsele)*. With his friends he pays a visit to the kraal of the girl, and enters the
*simbo* i. e. the hut in which the boys of the kraal live.

No sooner have they entered the *simbo* or the girls of the place go to greet the visitors, after which they bring them pipes and tobacco and go to fetch or prepare some gruel for them to drink. In the meantime the *intsele* goes to the hut of the particular girl's father to tell him that a friend of his has come for his daughter. The father will enquire from the *intsele* what kind of lad the boy is, whether he is of good family, whether he is not the son of a witchdoctor, whether he can pay a decent dowry, ect.

If the father agrees the *intsele* goes back to his friends in the *simbo* and reports that the father is willing, whereupon the boy proposes to the girl. There and then the girl decides whether she agrees or not. If she does not want the boy, then all is finished and visitors go home at once. If she agrees, they stay for the night. They sleep in the *simbo* separately together with the other boys and girls.

583 Then, in former years, in the early morning the visitors would catch the girl after she had left the *simbo*, and take her to her fiancé's village *(mako)*. On account of a government regulation, by which the dowry is now more or less fixed, this practice is no longer adhered to.

583 The boy and his friends go home. He informs his parents, who next day
● 585 send the *intsele* back with somebody else to pay the first instalment of the dowry, usually 2 or 3 head of cattle. They stay over the night, and in the morning they catch *(mako)* the girl, for she pretends not to like going along. After they have had some gruel to drink, the boys who brought the cattle more or less drag her out of the kraal. The girls from her village strip her absolutely naked, and the boys from there follow those who fetch the girl to take from them some of their orna-

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ments such as beads brass bangles, bracelets, ect. Then they are allowed to take the girl away, who goes along crying, or is dragged or pushed along and sometimes very roughly handled. After they have gone, the girls of the village dress themselves up in their best beads and tassels take their pipes and tobacco and follow them up.

When all arrive at the boy's village the couple enter the *simba*, where they spend the day together with the boys of the village and the girls who followed the fiancee. In the evening the boys leave the hut and the girls bring a cowhide, which they put down on the floor. The young couple lie together, the girls holding her down if she is afraid or shy. Immediately afterwards the girls look for the hymen. If they find some they put it on the leave of an *ochok*-plant and start singing. Their songs are not always very modest. 585

In the early morning they resume their singing and go home, singing all the way, carrying with them the hymen. Arriving at their kraal, the women meet them at the entrance, where the hymen is shown to them as a proof that the girl was still a virgin when leaving home. Then they throw it away, and the women of the kraal start singing and dancing with the girls, after which the latter get their morning meal of gruel and beans.

After the girls have left the kraal of the bridegroom, the bride gets a new "chip" and a new tassel. The latter is given her together with a goat, which later her sister will fetch away. The chip which she gets is a special one made for the occasion by her sisters-in-law. It is a fringe about a four inches long by three inches wide, made from the twisted fibrous marrow of a kaffir-corn stalk; some of th strings are blackened with charcoal, others whitened with *migosi*, others again coloured with red oker. With string his fringe is tied round the bride's waist to cover her nakedness. [431] [292]

From her brother-in-law the bride gets a hoe, formerly also a brass ornament round her forearm *(nalo)* and a leather string with iron beads about $^1/_2$ of an inch in diameter *(ataka)* to be worn round the waist. At present the bride gets with the hoe either a goat or the equivalent, 6 Shillings. [431] [301]

After 4 days the bride's father kills a bull and the meat is taken to the kraal of the bridegroom. Next day the people there have a good feed, and the morning following the women and girls of the neighbourhood gather to take the bride home to her father again. When getting near the kraal they sing and shout which rouses the women and girls of her own village, who come out dancing and singing to meet the bride. Arriving at the entrance the women of the kraal stand in the opening of the fence, and go on singing for a while, preventing the bride to enter. The singing finished, the brother of the bride brings a life chicken, of which he cuts the lower part of the beak. This is tied with a string round the bride's neck, and the chicken is given to the children of the village who now kill and eat it. Then the bride is allowed to enter. Food is brought, and the visitors stay for the night. In the early morning they go home again, leaving the bride with her father.

About 5 days later the bridegroom sends a couple of friends with 2 or 3 more head of cattle towards the dowry. One of them must be a heifer, and the man who takes the cattle over goes with a little stick of a powo-tree. With this stick

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585 he enters the hut of the bride's mother, and sticks it in the grass roof. The heifer is called the *roch powo*. The men who brought the cattle return with the chip of the bride, which is given to one of her sisters-in-law, who keeps it. Whenever the bride comes to the village of her husband she wares it again.

585 583 After some time more cattle are sent. Formerly a dowry sometimes used to run up to 18 or 20 head of cattle. When a certain part of the dowry has been paid off, the bride goes to her husband's village for a few days. About 2 months after she has returned again to her father, her husband gathers his friends. With a harp-player amongst them they go to the bride's village, where her father has killed a big bull for the proper marriage feast *(kisera)*. On this occasion the husband asks the girl's father leave to take his wife to his village for good. If he agrees then the girl goes along with him after the feast and takes a hindleg of the bull to the parents and relations of her husband.

585 A few days later word is sent to the bride's village that her husband wants to *riso* i. e. to seal the contract. Wen the messengers return, a bull is killed and all the meat, save one frontleg and the ribs of one side, is taken to the kraal of the bride. Now the girls of her village go to the bridegroom's place, where they grind food and cook it. When the food is dished up, the girls send word to the boys of the husband's kraal. These come and bring their presents, which consist of brass [301] bracelets, iron beads, finger rings, necklaces, beads, brass rings to put round the neck *(odeyo)*, ect., and all these presents are put together. Then the girls ask the bridegroom for 3 goats. He is supposed to give 3 goats or the equivalent a young bull. When these have been presented then only the girls start their meal consisting of the food they cooked, and the meat and ribs of the bull, which were not taken to the bride's village. They stay over the night. In the morning they devide amongst themselves the presents from the boys and go home.

That day the chip is definitely taken away from the bride, because now she has really become a woman of that village. At night the 2 bones of the cows leg with some meat are cooked for the bride, who calls the other women of the village. These take her for the first time to her mother-in-law's hut. When the bride came to the village on former occasions, she was never allowed to enter that hut, because her son had not fully married her yet.

585 273 The bride now goes home again where her father gets the ingredients for beer ready, which is to be brewn for his daughter's father-in-law, who comes over with his friends, his wife and the other women of the village, some chosen friends, and a singer, who has to sing at the beer party. The bridegroom does not go along, he has had his feast before; this one is in honour of his father. He takes a bull along and wants to know whether now a sufficient dowry has been paid. Lengthy discussions are held, and the news of their little world as well as old history are talked over round the beerpots, to which they return after their evening meal. Next morning a bull is killed for the visitors, who stay over that day and drink beer from [533] early morning till late at night, whilst the minstrel sings his songs and wets his throat alternatively. From the bride he gets the present of a goat for his services. — Once I saw one of these beerparties in full swing, and was told that during the 3 days it lasted so much beer was consumed, that the grain used in its preparations

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would have supplied sufficient food for the whole village (about 50 people) for 3 months. — When all the beer is finished the bridegroom's father asks his host whether his son may now build his wife a hut, and whether she may stay with him definitely. The worthy parent will answer: "No, not yet, because the heifer for the father of the girl *(roch wuoro)* is to be brought still."

Now the relations of the bridegroom go home taking a hindleg of the cow along, which is to be carried by the bride. But she will say: "It does not behove that I should walk along the road with my father-in-law; I will come later." Somebody of the party carries the leg, and she follows next day. Henceforward she is allowed to enter her mother-in-law's hut, where she does the cooking for her husband, and stays no longer in the simba. Unless she is with child already she goes home again after a few weeks, because her father has not quite released her yet, and she still plays about with her girl-friends.

When her husband has found the heifer still wanted by her father, he takes it to him. Again he asks leave to build a hut for his wife. If the father agrees he returns with his wife and starts building at once. The woman stays with her husband definitely, for the full dowry has been paid.

Some time later the woman's father brews beer and sends word to his son-in-law, who gathers his brothers and friends to go to this beer party *(kisech kongo)*. All of them except the husband himself go to the hut of his mother-in-law, where the beer stands ready. Not until he has given her either a goat or a sheep is he allowed to enter. This animal has to be handed over not by the husband himself, but by a relation of his. With this beer party the full marriage ceremony ends.

The woman, though she has her own hut now, goes on cooking in her mother-in-law's hut. Five months after she has conceived she has regularly to take *yeath agulu* which medicine has to be warmed up every time before taking it. This she does in her own hut. However, the evening before she boils this medicine for the first time, the children of the kraal pick some vegetables and cook them in the woman's hut. This is the first food cooked there. Both husband and wife, and also the children who cooked them partake of these vegetables.

From now onwards she cooks all the food in her own hut, but her husband is not allowed to eat any of it yet. He goes for his meals to his mother's hut. After about 4 days the woman goes home once more to fetch a goat for her husband. With the goat and also some other meat and fish she returns to her husband. When this food is cooked she calls her husband and the men of the village for a little feast. On this occasion she gives the goat to her husband, thereby sealing the contract with him *(criso chwore)*.

### Burial of a married Man.

In the olden days the death of a warrior was considered to be brought about by some enemy through witchcraft. This death had to be revenged. So the very next morning, before the man got buried, people got ready for a fight, and went out to the boundary of a hostile tribe to wage a war against them. No sooner was the warcry raised or the hostile tribe got ready too, and came to the boundary. Both parties took some of their cattle with them. After the fight the victorious party took the opponents cattle as spoils.

which is only eaten by men and young girls. Women despise sheep saying that they are the most foolish of animals and remark that their meat has a horrible odour. Poultry are placed by women in the same category as sheep because they eat dirty things, e.g., excreta and some ugly insects. 231 262

There are certain parts of a cow which are usually only eaten by special groups of people, e.g., the kidney and the abomasum are reserved for girls, the brisket and the abdominal muscles which originate from it for young men, the tongue and the hump for old men, and the diaphragm for those who take fresh blood from cattle for human consumption.

Cattle and goats are the chief animals used for the payment of dowries. Sheep are seldom used for this purpose because every girl believes that if a sheep is paid for her dowry it means that she is despised by her sweetheart. Sometimes this is enough to break off the marriage. The number of cattle paid for a dowry is usually between fourteen and twenty-four. More cattle are paid for the daughters of rich people and chiefs because these girls will, during their wedded life, take much property to their husbands: property collected during the frequent visits they pay to their fathers. 231 583 554 431

In the course of paying a dowry, discussions go on between the father, uncle, full and step-brothers of the girl as to who will receive some of the special animals paid for her dowry. The same applies in the case of the payment of the dowry by the man, for although the father is responsible for paying most of the cattle, he is helped by some of his uncles and brothers. 583

The first eight to twelve cattle paid, three to five of which are females, are taken by the full brothers of the girl. Sometime after this payment has been made the girl is caught in the morning by relations of her sweetheart who take her to him. From this day the girl is known as *miaha* (the bride) and the husband as *wuon kisera* (the bridegroom). In the afternoon of the day on which she is caught, her sisters follow her and stay with her at the bridegroom's home for a night, after which they return to their own home early in the morning. The bride is left with one of her girl-cousins who stays with her until she is brought back to her home so that payment of special cattle for her different relations may commence. The first eight to twelve cattle which were paid before she met her husband are not special cattle because they can be inherited by any of her full brothers. Sometimes in the morning of the first night that the bride stays with the bridegroom, her sisters-in-law (the wives of her brothers) go to the bridegroom's kraal and choose a bull. This bull is inherited by the bride's eldest brother. About two weeks after the bride and her cousin have been at the bridegroom's home, her father slaughters an ox and the meat is taken to the bridegroom's house, some cooked 583 585

583 and some raw. This meat is carried by her sisters and sisters-
585 in-law. The girls from her home and those at the bridegroom's home together with the bride, join in eating the cooked meat. The uncooked meat is left for the rest of the people at the bridegroom's house. A day or two after this, the bride is taken to her father's home accompanied by women and girls from the bridegroom's. Before they leave the house, the bridegroom presents a goat to the bride's cousin who has been staying with her at his home. The bride's father prepares a great feast for his daughter's companions. After the companions have gone home the girl now stays with her father while the special cattle of the dowry are being paid to her relations. The first one to be paid is usually a heifer which is inherited by one of her uncles. This is followed by a cow and her calf which are inherited by her father or one of her uncles. After this, if the marriage arrangements have been completed, the husband pays a bull known as "the bull for the fetching-girls,"—the sisters of the bride who accompany her when she first goes to the bridegroom. After this the bride with her sisters goes to the bridegroom who prepares a special feast for them. For this feast he slaughters an ox which is eaten by his sisters-in-law and the bride, while presents are being given to her by her brothers-in-law. This occurs in the evening and one gift
604 consists of a goat known as *diend yanyo maro* (the goat of abusing the mother-in-law). This goat is presented to her so that her husband may abuse her at any time during the period they live together. It is called the goat for abusing the mother
593 in-law because husbands usually abuse their wives comparing their foolishness with that of their mothers. The goat is usually inherited by the mother-in-law's last son.

The last and the most important animal is a cow with her calf known as "the mother-in-law's cow." It belongs to the mother-in-law and is paid at any time she asks for it. This is usually some years after the marriage. As a rule it is inherited by the mother-in-law's eldest son. There are some other special animals paid, but they are of less importance and are paid only when the girl or her relations accept the dowry reluctantly. During payment of the dowry each of the girl's relations is responsible for providing a small feast when his portion is brought, e.g., when a cow with her calf is brought to the girl's father or uncle, he must slaughter a ram or more and make beer for those who bring them. Long ago the relations of a girl did not slaughter so many sheep and goats for their son-in-law's relations, but nowadays some people slaughter so many that if the arrangements for the marriage are broken off, the son-in-law's relations may only have six or nine cattle back out of sixteen they paid. Deductions are made to compensate for the small stock slaughtered for the feasts.

14: Johnston G-4, 5 (no date) 1904 FL11 Luo FL11



273
234 Both sexes drink the *beer* which is made from grain, but the women never drink with the men. The women make the *butter*.

326 The men do not *smelt iron*, but obtain it in pig form from the Bantu
439 Kavirondo. There is even a certain prejudice against *blacksmiths* amongst
[564] the Ja-luo. They are called "Yothetth," and among some of the tribes constitute a separate caste called "Uvino." They *forge* spears, knives, bill-hooks, and axes, but their hoes are imported from their Bantu
411 neighbours. *Shields* are made of buffalo or ox hide, and also of ambatch wood. Their *spears* have small heads, and shafts of tremendous length. They use *clubs*, and also long leaf-shaped swords, which they have borrowed from the Masai or Nandi. Bows and arrows are still employed,
278 but the arrows are no longer poisoned. Poison was said to be derived
534 from the venom of snakes, and also from certain herbs. Their musical instruments are very similar to those of the Kavirondo Bantu.

583 Girls are betrothed at the age of seven, and go to their husbands
584 at the age of ten or eleven, payment being made by degrees over the years elapsing between the betrothal and the *marriage*. The girl is taken
● 585 by her unmarried girl companions to her husband's house. The father of the girl kills an ox and takes the meat, together with a quantity of sorghum porridge, to the bridegroom's house to provide a *wedding feast*. On the following day the bridegroom's brothers, and his other wives, if he has any, take the newly wedded wife back to her father's village, where there is another great feast. The bridegroom does not attend. The father of the girl next day presents his daughter with a goat, and she returns to her husband, who continues to make payments to his father-in-law. The total amount of the marriage payment may reach to six cows, or their equivalent. If the man stops paying, his wife will leave him and go back to her father's village until the payments are resumed. If within a year of the marriage the woman does not bear a child, the husband may stop his payments, but he has no claim to the return of what has been already
587 paid, so long as his wife remains with him. If a wife dies without having borne children, the amount paid for her is returned, unless the husband agrees to accept one of his *deceased wife's sisters*, for whom only a small complimentary present is paid. If a woman refuses to stop with
586 her husband, she is given to another man, and whatever this man gives for her is paid over to her first husband. If a woman has a child and is ill-treated, she may leave her husband, but must leave her child behind with the father. If the child be a boy, when he grows up and the mother gets old she generally returns to live with her son. If after
583 a marriage has been arranged an avaricious father is loth to part with his daughter, the young man employs his friends to waylay the girl in the daytime. If, however, the girl after capture refuses to stop with her

17: Southall E-5 (1946-1947) 1952 FL11 Luo FL11



lineage of the murdered man endeavoured to kill a member of the murderer's lineage in revenge. But the family of the murderer could forestall this process by offering a girl or twelve head of cattle in compensation. If wilful murder occurs between segments within the same maximal lineage, fighting may again occur and a member of the murderer's segment be killed in revenge. Here it is impossible for a girl of the group to be offered in compensation since she would be of the same maximal lineage and exogamous group as the murdered man, and could not be married by any kinsman of his. But the senior elder recognized by both segments calls a council representative of both, and the murderer, if judged guilty, is supposed to be exiled. When a man kills a close relative, belonging to his own minimal class A segment of the maximal lineage, it is *masira*—a ritual offence.[1] The murderer must bury his relative and stay by the grave until *chola* (the first mourning period) is finished. He must cohabit with the dead man's wife, if she has borne no children to her husband, so that she may bear a child to be named after the dead and to guard his homestead.[2]

The level of groups between which marriage can take place thus corresponds to the level at which general relations cease to be those prescribed between kinsmen, and the groups with which marriage is possible tend to be those between which hostility is the usual attitude. The Luo recognize this correlation, and regard *ochi* (in-laws) and *wasigu* (enemies) as almost interchangeable terms.

The normal form of marriage is negotiated by go-betweens on behalf of bride and bridegroom with their respective families. A transfer of cattle has to be made to the bride's family, the normal number being twelve. When the two families are agreed as to the suitability of the match, the groom arranges for a party of his friends to drag the bride from her home. The bride is expected to make a show of resistance and weeping, but it is significant that the dragging must not take place when the bride's parents are absent from the homestead. After the bride is thus brought to the *simba* of the groom, the latter deflowers her in the presence of married men and women witnesses; the tokens of her virginity are placed on potsherds and paraded in triumph to the bride's home the next day and a feast is held there. If the bride fails to prove her virginity in this way no feast is held, and one head of cattle less is paid to her family. The real commencement of a marriage is said to be the groom's sending of *ruoth kode* (the 'heifer of the stick'), which goes to the bride's mother, and a bull to her father. Then comes the main payment, varying according to the wealth of the two parties and to the general level of Luo wealth in cattle at the time, but usually eight upwards. After this bride and groom live together for some time in the latter's *simba*, and then the bride gets permission to return to her own home. The groom goes there with a heifer and a bull, and the feast of *kisera* is held. This completes the statutory twelve cattle of the bridewealth. Bride and groom then return

[1] Some statistics of actual cases would be required to discover how far the level of segment within which murder is treated in this way coincides with that within which widows of kinsmen may be inherited and assistance given in marriage payments. My stay was too short for the collection of such statistics, but my impression was that such a coincidence is very vague, and it is certainly not consciously present in the minds of the Luo.

[2] Cf. Evans-Pritchard, *Some Aspects of Marriage and the Family among the Nuer*, pp. 5–10. Despite its importance among the Nuer, the obligation of ghost marriage is far from universal among Nilotic peoples. Among the Luo-speaking group it is not practised by the Kenya Luo nor by the Alur nor, probably, the Acoli.

17: Southall E-5 (1946-1947) 1952 FL11 Luo FL11



to his home and continue to live in the *simba*, the bride not cooking on her own, but in the veranda of her mother-in-law's hut, and her food not being eaten by her husband (who continues to eat his mother's food) but only by the young men. Later still the ceremony of *riso* is performed, which is considered a final confirmation of the marriage contract by the two families. However, further ceremonies follow, in which the husband gives his father-in-law the bull of *alioch* and his mother-in-law the goat of *awa thunda*. Then the father-in-law settles upon his daughter the heifer of *ataka*, a bull, two goats, and a hoe, in token that he now gives up all claim upon his daughter as long as the marriage continues. Eventually husband and wife move out of the *simba* into a new hut built for her by him, and she begins to cook on her own and he to eat her food. The sequence of ceremonies associated with marriage is thus complicated and protracted. There is no specified time schedule, but the bride may have given birth several times before they are concluded.

Less prestige attaches to the form of marriage contracted by a man and woman without prior formal approval from their respective families. This occurred in the past if a girl was made pregnant in the *simba* and was sent straight to her lover, or on the elopement of a married woman with her adulterer, or on the remarriage of a divorced woman. This type of marriage is becoming very common today, when adherence to traditional ritual is lax, and when the young are able with impunity to short-cut both the tedious formalities and the great expenses of the most approved form of marriage. In this form of marriage cattle are still claimed by the bride's father, or by the former husband in the case of divorce and remarriage, but they are fewer in number. The essential differences from the first type of marriage are that the bride loses her virginity before any sort of marriage negotiation has taken place between the two families, and the contract eventually made between them is a recognition of a *fait accompli* instead of the careful planning of a mutually approved match.

A dead man's widows are normally taken up by his kinsmen at the final ceremonies of the funeral, a year or more after the death. These kinsmen are nearly always husband's brothers or stepsons to the widows and they would certainly never be kinsmen from outside the dead man's minimal class A lineage; but the Luo do not consciously relate the matter of widow inheritance to a specific grade of lineage. Among their husband's close kinsmen widows are allowed considerable freedom of choice. It was considered desirable that a man should replace a wife who had died, or a wife who was barren, by a sister of hers, which he could usually do for an amount of bridewealth far smaller than that of the original marriage. Ritual offences rather than infidelities were considered grounds for divorce. If the wife was judged guilty the husband claimed back the bridewealth cattle, less deductions of one head for the wife's work during the marriage, two for each girl, and three for each boy born of it, and others to replace those consumed in the marriage ceremonies. But if the husband was at fault he might be prevented from claiming any cattle back by a brother demanding the woman in his stead.

As has been stated, the cattle of a homestead are all herded together, but there are clearly recognized divisions in the ownership of the herd. There are three main categories: the cattle owned by the father, the cattle owned by his wives, and the cattle held in trust by them for the marriages of their sons. Though the father cannot interfere with the two latter categories except by agreement, he is regarded none the

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difficult burden is imposed on the girls, who have to endure considerable inhibition to avoid social censure. On the other hand, boys enjoy much greater freedom. It would appear that this relatively stronger censure of a girl's conduct derives its strength from the anatomical evidence a woman is required to show on her day of marriage to prove her chastity. In this way it appears to be the duty of society to make sure that girls live up to the moral standards which ensure them a successful marriage. Therefore, whilst considerable intermingling is accorded to both sexes, relationships resulting in pregnancies and prostitution are discouraged. And, as has been seen, the social stigma attached to such relationships and their results comes down most heavily on the woman.

In view of the difficulties involved, the girl therefore adopts a compromise. She uses her wit as a defensive means of enabling her to enjoy the companionship of men and at the same time to help her to avoid being overcome by their reasoning. In this way, an adolescent girl who is clever at conversation is admired and considered entertaining by those men with whom she comes into contact.

When there are meetings between young girls and men there is accordingly a great deal of artful conversation. Girls consider men to be full of tricks designed to trap them. Mothers also warn their growing daughters to be careful of their conduct when with the opposite sex, explaining particularly that men are not to be played with to an extent where the matter becomes serious.

When girls go about together in a group they reproach any of their number who give in to men easily. On these occasions group morality is far stronger than among those who are more individual in their attitudes.

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this attitude that unmarried girls, as they grow older, are often forced to marry in the end by taking advantage of the institution of polygamy, which acts as a final method of absorption. Although she may live to an advanced age, a single girl is continually tormented by the fact that society does not approve of unmarried girls. 589 595

*Restrictions.* Traditionally, a mature girl is not allowed to enter her father's or her mother's sleeping place, especially if the mother is still giving birth to children. This restriction, although generally ignored by Christians, applies also to the wives of her uncles. Those who are her parents or parents by marriage do not go where a girl receives her male visitors. By custom this hut was built beyond view of the parents' huts and served as a sleeping place for boys. It is considered that a girl who has commenced associating with men should not enter her mother's or father's hut because she would interfere with their powers of reproduction. 594 513 882 [177] [602] [842]

*Relationship with brothers.* The fear of incest has led to the practice of keeping young women's activities as separate as possible from those of their brothers, but free association and conversation concerning their mutual interests generally takes place, since brothers and sisters retain an interest in each others' love affairs. From his sisters, a young man may be informed of things he wishes to know about his girl friend. 593 835

*Pre-marital pregnancy.* Cases of pre-marital pregnancy were very rare in the past, according to most of my informants. But this rarity was not due to the fact that sexual relationships were prohibited. Pregnancy among mature girls was apparently not infrequent from any strict moral code, but from the conscious effort of the girls themselves to guard against it. Because much importance was attached to virginity, it was a matter of personal pride and was carefully guarded. It was a great honour and a 836 848 [585] [554]

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source of much social rejoicing to discover that a married woman had been found to be a virgin. Such a bride was given a high prestige among the other women.

In the past, if a woman gave birth to an illegitimate child, her only chance of marriage was to an old man with a number of wives. There was no possibility of occupying the position of chief wife of the family; and the heads of cattle paid were much fewer. The child was taken by the man who legally married her, but she was not allowed to give birth in her own home. Everything was done to get rid of her as soon as possible.

Examples of such pregnancies are very common at present. But although social disapproval is still keenly felt, modern conditions have become more favourable to women in this situation, and an increasing number of them are being married to bachelors. Unlike some communities, no death punishment was ever given. If the occurrence takes place between close relatives the matter is kept secret; in the past, however, the couple could be exiled.

### Modern Education and Adolescent Girls

Progress in the education of adolescent girls is hampered because the Luo people do not appreciate its suitability to the environment of their women. To the majority, modern education is associated with clerical work and the many other jobs that men take up after a school career. The position of girls in this scheme is not clearly envisaged.

The social importance attached to marriage is having to adapt itself to a prolonged school career and the raised age for marriage which this implies. An inability to appreciate schooling for girls is also based on a high esteem for the traditional education which it tends to interrupt and weaken.

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## Aspects of Marriage

*Dowry*. The payment of a dowry takes place when the suitor of a young woman has formally presented himself to her parents and obtained their consent. Having agreed to marry him, the woman arranges the interview with the parents. The news of his coming is generally communicated to the father through the mother. In certain matters relating to her sexual life, the girl might confide in her mother, with whom she naturally feels very much at home.

*The traditional marriage*. The traditional marriage, which has undergone considerable modification in many respects, is characterized by a number of ceremonies. The ceremonies which follow take place after the 'meko' or 'catching', a term applied to the act of seizing a girl and dragging her to her husband's home. This 'catching' is arranged by the husband and his relatives. Normally the girl is aware of it long before it takes place. The time when it will occur can be estimated by considering the number of cattle paid in—between seven and eight according to my own experience. After this time arrives the girl must restrict her movements lest she tempt her suitor to 'catch' her.

Having decided to 'catch' her, he tries by several methods to get her out of the reach of her brothers, who would normally put up a strong fight before allowing their sister to go. If the bridegroom's friends fail to lure her away from her home, they attempt to 'catch' her in it. But this can be done only where there is no strong force of young men to match the raiders. In such an event, arrangements would be secretly made with the woman in whose hut the girl sleeps; and a small payment having been made to her, the bride is seized in the dark.

Sometimes the father gives permission for his daughter

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to be seized; but even when the father has agreed to let his daughter go, the younger relations put up a fight, not in order to detain the girl, but to test the courage of the people taking her. This is also done to test the value attached to her as a future wife in her husband's community.

Among the majority of young women an unwillingness to leave home is exhibited on the last day. This unwillingness, accompanied by violet outbursts of emotion, is partly caused by the break with her family and familiar environment that marriage involves. Sometimes the emotional outbursts reach undue proportion, rendering the young woman a thorough misfit in her new home. Screaming is common even among those who are secretly pleased with the situation.

To a person unused to this sight it would appear to be an act of violence and injustice. But though some of the women may be sincerely upset, a large number of them look back on the incident with great satisfaction and confess that they screamed because it was customary to do so. This is made even clearer by their reactions when they are later present at similar incidents. Amidst great laughter they say comforting words to the girl being dragged, assuring her that she will meet with excellent treatment.

*The traditional ceremonies.* The news that a particular girl has been caught is followed by the organization of a group of young girls to follow after the bride. It is this group which brings back news to the parents as to whether the girl was a virgin. They remain at the bride's new home for one night and during this time young men were by tradition allowed to spend the night in the same hut with these girls.

The next ceremony takes place when the bride's parents slaughter an ox and send special parts of the

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meat to be shared among the different families within the larger lineage to which the husband belongs. This is followed by a big feast at the girl's home where people spend a whole night outside, drinking, eating, and singing. When the girl returns to his home it is time for the husband to continue paying dowry as demanded by her parents.

The final ceremony marking the completion of the dowry and indicating the husband's satisfaction with his wife is called 'riso'. At this the husband slaughters an animal and gives a great feast to his relatives.

*Variants of traditional marriage customs.* With the introduction of modern ideas and the widening of the people's physical environment, a large number of special marriages now occur which omit various features of the traditional ceremony. This is especially true of marriages where there is a strong basis of love. In such instances a young woman may go to her suitor without ceremony after making some private arrangement.

Christian influence has greatly modified marriage. Like the traditional marriage the Christian version is characterized by many ceremonies, some new and some old. Thus in the traditional marriage the husband is required at each stage to make several payments in live animals to cover certain procedures, and in Christian marriage he can cover all of them at once by paying a live animal or some money.

The violence which characterized former marriages is absent from the Christian ceremony. In reality, what happens inside the church is purely western, but what occurs outside is a blend of modified traditional practices and certain features of western life. Christian marriage is distinguished from traditional marriage by the large expense involved. Thus, contrary to what might be expected, it is among the Christians that people exist who

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demand very high dowries for their daughters. Like the traditional marriage it[1] is also accompanied by considerable emotional strain, felt more by the mother and female children than by the male members of the family.

[1] [i.e. Christian marriage. – Analyst]

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# VI

## MARRIED LIFE

WITH the exception of those women who move with their husbands to the towns, the majority of rural married women go through a period of living under the close supervision of their mothers-in-law. The duration of this time depends on the mutual feeling between wife and mother-in-law.

The married woman must learn everything possible about her new family. The mother-in-law tells her about the various sources of food and assists her to fit into her new life in the manner desired. Very often this involves unlearning certain things she has learnt at home. Among other things, she must learn the meal hours and individual tastes of those in the new family, and this brief probationary period gives character to her future relationship with them. At this time a mean woman is soon known by her behaviour; moreover, in the earlier stages of her married life a young wife is constantly accompanied by a companion who reports her general attitude to the family.

Other women in the home may also send her on errands wherever they wish, the idea being to test her character in the communal life of women. Hence unpopularity would have a profound effect upon her, and through her, upon her husband. But although she is under the authority of her mother-in-law or someone occupying the same position, her mother-in-law's actions are also open to censure by the other women. The problem of fitting a wife into this new life is thus a family affair.

Great importance is still attached to the traditional



[text continues on p. 53]

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schooling of wives, but modern young women sometimes rebel against this ordered régime, choosing rather to do as they please in their new homes.

Since the introduction of the plough, the part played by men in the cultivation of the fields has greatly increased. Clearing and ploughing are now done by men, but planting and harvesting are still carried on largely by women.

*Women's organizations.* In the past, women's activities were limited in number. Apart from the communal dancing parties in which they took a great pride, there existed among certain related families councils to settle disputes and misconduct among women. This communal organization has tended to become weaker with the growing family individuality introduced by modern conditions.

While Christian influence has increased their freedom by releasing women from tribal prejudice and by widening the horizon of men's views, pagan women are still hampered from taking an active part in modern economic and social activities.

Women's organizations range from small religious groups to registered co-operative societies. The management of the co-operative societies is largely in the hands of Christian women. They are thus more progressive than their pagan neighbours, although the gap is rapidly narrowing owing to the influence exercised by Christian women upon the other women in the community.

*The changing economy.* Before the introduction of a money economy, the garden formed the basis of the economic life of women. Their transactions depended on garden produce which they bartered in exchange for live animals. The more industrious and economical thus acquired considerable wealth, supplementing garden

[Text continues on p.55]